

## How to Book an International Trip for Under \$1k (#TN1k)

My name is Zim Ugochukwu and I'm the founder and CEO of Travel Noire. For those who are unfamiliar with the Travel Noire, we're a platform dedicated to bringing unconventional travelers and helping them to discover their journey. So what does that mean exactly? From dreaming up a new destination to planning how to get there, to maximizing your experience while you're there, we're creating a suite of products to help you travel better, travel farther and cheaper than you've ever imagined. So, this hangout is all about booking the vacation of your dreams for under \$1,000, food, flight and accommodations included.

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Now, we're going to move on to the good stuff. We've got five amazing curators ... Modupe, Anthony, Jelisa, Jessica & Quinn...who will be giving you a brief introduction followed by a rundown of their itineraries. We're going to start with Anthony.

**Zim:** So Anthony, tell us your name, where you are, what you do and give us a sneak peek into your itinerary.

**Anthony:** Alright. Well, my name is Anthony and I am in Seattle, Washington and I will run through a group trip to Costa Rica and I think this is probably going to be the best group trip of all time.

**Zim:** Awesome. Alright, now we're going to move over to Jelisa.

**Jelisa:** Hi, my name is Jelisa Mone. I live in Ibiza, Spain and I'm a marketing coordinator for The Enter Group and my trip includes base jumping, an obstacle course and doing yoga on the river.

**Zim:** Nice! Alright, Jessica.

**Jessica:** Hi, I'm Jessica. I'm from Texas but I currently live in Washington, D.C., where I work in Finance for a national trade association that's headquartered here and I will be sharing the luxury, romantic itinerary for two.

**Zim:** Awesome. Alright, Modupe.

**Modupe:** Hi, I'm Modupe. I live in the Boston area. I have the budget itinerary, which will include volcanoes, crystal clear waters, and sailing the open seas.

**Zim:** Alright, last but not least, Quinn.

**Quinn:** Hi, my name is Quinn Russell. I live in Florida...Delray Beach, Florida. I have the Asian getaway itinerary. I'm a travel blogger. I focus on luxury travel. My getaway is for ten days. It's to Shanghai and we'll be experiencing one of Mainland China's largest museums. We'll go to a water town that's hailed as the "Venice of the East" and we'll also spend a day at the Park Hyatt, which is the second highest hotel in the world.

**Zim:** Alright, that's awesome. Okay, so let's get started. As you all heard, we have five itineraries: Budget, Asia, Group, Europe, and Luxury. We will be making these itineraries available to everybody who's tuning in so you'll be able to see first-hand through downloadable itineraries where everybody got their information so that you can plan your next amazing getaway. So after everyone presents their itineraries, we'll be taking questions from the audience. You can click the "Q&A" button and you will be able to ask us questions and so the questions that sort of rise up to the top are the ones that we will be answering. So, let's get started. Modupe is going to take us through her 1K vacation.

**Modupe:** Alright, let's get started here. So, are we good?

Zim: We areee good.

**Modupe:** Alright everybody. So, thank you very much Zim. My challenge for this hangout was to create a full budget travel itinerary for under \$1,000. As I searched...as I started my search, an amazing opportunity for a Caribbean Escape emerged and here is what I found. I'll be talking y'all to St. Lucia for six days and six nights where you'll live like the locals do and enjoy the essence of island life. You'll fly out of the NYC area, stay in a cozy apartment with incredible views and enjoy some of the best activities, food and entertainment the island has to offer. I used theflightdeal.com to find this great discounted airfare. Do not adjust your eyes. That says \$207. This site is pretty different from comparison sites in that it operates by providing visitors with alerts. The alerts should show major discounted fare from tons of US airports for domestic and international travel. The only caveat is that you really have to book quickly in order to secure prices shown in the alerts and then next, I basically head over to Kayak or Orbitz to find the itinerary and then I book the flight.

**Zim:** So, what was the...what was the first engine that you used?

**Modupe:** theflightdeal.com. It's actually the icon down there in the bottom under "Resources Used."

**Zim:** Got it.

**Modupe:** Alright, next up we have accommodations. I typically use sites like Trip Advisor to help me narrow down areas with the best neighborhoods, accessibility, safety and things to do. Once narrowed down, I plugged in the Castries area of St. Lucia into Airbnb and settled on this amazing little gem...a fully equipped kitchen, fantastic views, restaurants just around the corner, Wi-Fi and a five minute walk to the beach are just some of the great perks offered. The host even provides a pick-up from the airport...to and from the airport and that basically allows you to keep even more money in your pocket. Alright, now while days of resting and relaxation are definitely necessary on the island, definitely don't forget about your activities. Again, I used reviews from Trip Advisor to find the most popular and worthwhile activities. Island riders is a great all day activity that allows you to tour the

island in a really unique way: on land, on water ...on a horse. Mama, I'm on a horse. Meals and all alcoholic beverages and non-alcoholic beverages are completely included in this trip.

I also have you visiting the only drive-in volcano in the Caribbean. When you visit the Sulfur Springs in St. Lucia, you will enjoy a day of hot springs, bubbling mud pools and a relaxing day exploring one of St. Lucia's top tourist attractions. And last but not least, even though this is a budget travel, why not get more bang for your dollar? With the wave runner team, you'll spend the day sailing, snorkeling and exploring the island of Martinique. This trip also includes food and beverages. I mean, I don't know about y'all but two islands for under \$1,000, that's a phenomenal way to get the most out of your travels. Now, on to the next: food.

This is what I live for! This is the good stuff: roti, barbecue, curry galore. You'll basically be eating like the locals do for incredibly cheap prices. Additionally, your apartment comes with a fully equipped kitchen. So, cooking one quick, easy meal a day shouldn't be too time-consuming. Additionally, you also have local restaurants and bars where you're staying with great entertainment live music while you're dining out so you're basically gonna sit back and take it all in and gain as much weight as humanly possible. So, your final price tag, everything included (trip transportation, accommodations... food), is coming down to...drum roll please... \$966.80. Do not budge my friends. That is the truth. That's not a bad way to travel for under \$1,000 if you ask me.

**Zim:** Alright, that is awesome! Thank you thank you thank you thank you. Alright, so if you have any questions for Modupe, feel free to head over to the "Q&A" box and enter those questions in there. We are going to move on next to Jelisa.

**Jelisa:** Okay. So, for mine, I had a destination Europe and I chose to take you guys to Berlin. So, can you see my screen?

**Zim:** Not yet

**Jelisa:** You can see it now?

**Zim:** Nope

**Jelisa:** Wait, hold on. There we go.

**Zim:** Perfect

**Jelisa:** Okay, so I chose Berlin because it's not one of the typical choices that people choose whenever they go to Europe like London, Paris and Barcelona. It's just as great. If not, better. So, the first thing is the flight. Our flight is only \$514.68 to go from New York, New York to Berlin, Germany and you stop over in Norway for six hours. So, if you would like, you could leave the airport and go visit Norway for a little bit. Next is accommodations and I chose Airbnb because Airbnb is great for first-time travelers or long-term travelers. You get the same luxury of the hotel for a fraction of the price and it's better than jumping right in...straight right into a hostel because maybe you're not comfortable with the hostel just yet and you should travel more before you get comfortable with the hostel.

So, our apartment is in downtown Berlin...really close to everything and it's only \$157 for seven days and, these are the free activities in Berlin. There's a ton of free activities. I only

chose two for you guys. One is of course, the obvious, the Berlin wall...the one separating East and West Germany and it's now an artifact and it's now home to a lot of thought provoking murals and great Instagram shots. So, next you can go to Tiergarten. It's a really expansive park in the middle of Berlin and it has breathtaking scenery and here's some more activities. You can have a yoga class and go swimming in a pool that's right in the middle of the river in Berlin or you can take a chocolate cooking course at the #3 restaurant in Berlin called Fassbender & Rausch. Also, you can go on a Berlin city bus tour, which is imperative and informative if this is your first time visiting and it's only \$32 and from the first day of spring to the last day of fall, Berlin has a lot of open air activities. Since in the winter it's freezing cold, the second that they get warm weather, they just...they love being outside so there's a lot of free things to do outside and this is only \$9 to watch a movie outside.

That's pretty cool and, if you're feeling adventurous, you can go base jumping in the middle of Alexander Platz, which is really close to your Airbnb hotel and it's only \$69 and also for \$25, you can visit Museum Island, which is the home of five museums in the middle of Berlin and then, last but not least, is the Berlin tower. It takes you to 1200 ft into the sky overlooking Berlin and it has a bar and a restaurant in the top. So, if you're not afraid of heights, go ahead and have some delicious food at the top of Berlin. And last is our food.

It's important to locate a grocery store whenever you land or whenever you unpack all of your clothes because you can buy all your staples there: your water, your fruits, your snacks and your pasta and instead of eating like mediocre food everyday, it's better to cook one or two meals everyday and then, do like the locals do and save your money to eat amazing food maybe three or four times. So, I have you guys buying staples to eat like fruit and chocolate and pasta and all this stuff for everyday when you're going around. But, you also have \$70 to eat the delicious Berlin food. So, all together you spent \$995 and you had an amazing time in Berlin.

**Zim:** Awesome Awesome Awesome Awesome. Alright, so if you have questions for Jelisa, you should again, click on the "Q&A" box and we'll get to them after everyone presents. Next, we're going to move on to Jessica. Jessica, you're still on mute.

**Jessica:** Good look. Alright, so when Netflix with your bae just won't do, I'm here to show you how far \$1,000 for a luxury, romantic trip with your significant other can go. So, here's the overview. This trip includes a flight to the Cusco region of Peru in South America, five star hotel accommodations for four days and three nights as well as some suggestions for dining out, attractions and activities and of course, I'll note all of the resources that I use along the way to build the itinerary. So, for the flight, we're all at Travel Noire fans of theflightdeal.com. I started searching here and found a roundtrip airfare from Washington, D.C. to Peru for \$400. Just to put that price into perspective, that same flight using the same airline and the same number of stops but booked in January 2015 would cost over \$1,000.

So you can see theflightdeal.com is really good in terms helping you find a good window of dates for a particular location. In addition to theflightdeal.com, I also recommend looking into airfarewatchdog.com and Travel Zoo air deals. So, I subscribe to all three of those through RSS feeds in my Outlook inbox. So, I would just take that deal, plug it into the ITA Matrix airfare search. This is basically a..like...it allows you to see price sensitivity for different departure dates and different duration for trips. So I would just take that deal that

I found on the flightdeal.com, go plug it into ITA Matrix Airfare Search and for example, if I wanted to leave on a Thursday and stay for four nights, I can compare price wise what that would be like versus leaving on a Friday and staying for three nights. Then, once I found the itinerary that works for me, again, this is just a search and filter tool. You would use the specific airline details and the flight information to go directly through a booking site. So here, this is just what that looks like out of the Matrix Airfare Search.

I would just jot down the airlines, which are here: Copa, Avianca... and then the dates. Then, I would plug that into an Orbitz search or you can use Kayak or you can use any of the other airfare booking sites and you just kind of see at the bottom where I narrowed down to my preferred airlines, which I know are Avianca and Copa Airlines, and found a flight for...found my flight for \$400. For accommodations, I always always always always start with Trip Advisor. It's really good if you need to filter, like for today, you wanna filter on a luxury hotel that's known for service, known for romance, or may be located next to a major attraction. You can filter for a five-star hotel like I've done here, and I always am wanting to look at the most recent reviews. So within the past week or so, I wanna know what other folks, that have stayed in a particular hotel have to say about their stay and I'm also gonna look at the worst reviews. But, that's just me. I wanna know like, what's the worst thing? It may be an amazing hotel but a person had a bad experience in terms of service or with the staff.

So, I use Trip Advisor similar to the ITA Matrix Search for airfare in that I just wanna know, you know, what are my options? But, when it's time to book, I go over to hotels.com because they have a great welcome rewards program that rewards you for every ten nights that you book through their site, you get one free hotel stay. As you can see, for my trip, I found a rate of \$228 per night, which comes to \$114 per person. So, now this is the lux part. I'm just gonna let you guys take in all this fabulousness...what \$114 a night gets you (oohh and ahhhss). This is all baby making stuff. That tub looks large enough for two. Indoor/outdoor pool for those Instagram photos that you wanna tag to Travel Noire...for spa...relaxation...formal dining...a little bar action...alfresco.

Now, I know what you're thinking. After looking at this all luxury hotel, five-star, you're not even gonna want to leave this room. You're just gonna start working on that baby. But, since you did take that 14+ hour flight, I'm just gonna put some recommendations out there for activities that you can do while in Peru. So, the resources that I used were, again, Trip Advisor is very good about ranking the things that you can do in a particular city: Viator, which is kind of like...tells you all of the tours that are arranged in an area so you can search there to find out. Once you find out what you wanna do from Trip Advisor, you can use Viator to find out group led tours and things like that from Viator and also, I searched travenoire.com and NomadicMatt for reviews from other people that have figured out how to do the same thing for less. So, of course you wanna take a look at maybe an all day tour to the Sacred Valley of the Incas in Peru or of course you have to get, again, your Travel Noire Instagram pic of Machu Picchu. All this together ...\$976.30 versus Netflix with your bae.

**Zim:** That's awesome. Thank you Jessica. So, again, if you have questions for Jessica, feel free to head over to the "Q&A" and ask her directly. We are going to move on to the Asian Persuasion, Quinn, who will be taking us over to China.

**Quinn:** Okay, let me pull up my presentation. Okay, you see it pretty good?

**Zim:** Yup.

**Quinn:** Okay. Alright, so I'm gonna start with my itinerary: Destination Asia for Under \$1,000 and we're gonna go to Shanghai. It's one of the most exciting cities in China and I definitely wanted to pick this destination because they have such amazing architecture and food and culture and a lot of free activities. So, our overall itinerary is ten days in Shanghai from November 20<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> this year. You're gonna fly out Delta. Our accommodation is booked through Airbnb and one main thing that you have to remember is that you have to book a Chinese Visa when going to China and that costs \$140 so prepare for that about two to three months in advance before booking your ticket. That's the first thing that you should actually do before booking your ticket and accommodations because you have to have that to get into China. Some activities we're gonna do is the Shanghai Museum, the Ancient Water City around Shanghai, Walking the Bund, the Park Hyatt Shanghai Spa, that's an amazing luxury experience, and a day trip to Hangzhou, which is another really cool town right close to Shanghai. Our food is \$17 a day and the resources that I've used for this is Viator, Delta and Airbnb.

So, we're gonna look at the flight and the way that I booked my ticket is using the Delta SkyMiles program. With that, you use your Delta SkyMiles credit card or check card and with everyday purchases, you build up points and so for people that use that card a lot, they can build up a lot of points to travel to many destinations of their choice and a trip to Shanghai, with the Delta SkyMiles credit card is 60,000 per route per way. So, that comes up to 120,000 points and I was departing from Miami to Shanghai and Shanghai back to Miami and, moving on to accommodations. Now, my personal taste is usually..it's authentic luxury. You know, I like to blend in with some locals but, I do like to experience, you know, the finer things when traveling...a little bit of that...and that's why I focus on my travel blog. It's a lot of luxury travel. It's a lot of hotel reviews and video tours. So, trying to juggle the \$1,000 and finding accommodations that I would like was a challenge. But, what I was taxed to do and I definitely found something that seemed comfortable and was booked through Airbnb. Now, the location of this rental is in Pudong, which is the actual downtown area of Shanghai and it's only for \$32 a night. It's a shared apartment. So, you actually get the master bedroom. You have your own ensuite bathroom. It's directly located next to the metro so that takes you right into all the tourist spots that, you know, you'd wanna explore while in Shanghai. It has a lot of natural light. It just has some really good reviews. So, this is why I chose this and you can see, it has a really nice green space at the bottom of the apartment complex.

Now, some activities...I chose some free activities and some activities that you have to pay for. So, starting with the Shanghai Museum, this is a cultural activity. It's one of the largest museums in Mainland China. It has over 120,000 Chinese relics so you can really take in the culture and learn a lot about China while visiting this Museum and it's completely free and then, China has water towns that are around the city and they're called "The Venice of the East" and if you go there, you'll really see why it's called that because there's canals cutting through all of the town spaces and you can take a leisure boat and just tour that space. But, you can also walk around. Taking the boat, that's charged. But, walking around the water city is absolutely free and you can definitely get that Travel Noire photo when you're visiting that area. Another really cool activity is walking the Bund. Now, this is...Shanghai was once hailed as the "New York of the East" cause, back in the 1920s and 30s and even earlier than that, they had a lot of trade and they have a lot of art deco architecture. So, the

Bund was essentially, I'd say maybe like the downtown space where all the high rises were of that time and you'll see a lot of really cool streamlined architecture...art deco styles...really western style.

So, when you go there, you're taken back to a time...that's really quite interesting and that's a free activity. You can walk. It's a good place to get some really great photographs of the old Shanghai, which is the Bund area, and then looking across the Huangpu river, which looks to Pudong, which then has all the new skyscrapers that Shanghai is so famous for. So another activity, which I chose was the Park Hyatt Shanghai. This is what's formally known as the world's tallest hotel. It's now the second tallest. The first tallest is now in Dubai. But, I choose this destination...this activity because like I said, I really like the luxury activities and I chose a day at the Park Hyatt starting with the spa treatment and also afternoon tea and that comes in at \$150. Now, that's a definite splurge. But, if you want to look at the image, the bottom image to the left showing that view...I mean it's incredible! The views that you get, the experience that you have, it's second to none and it's something that you can definitely share with people and through Instagram and it's something that you'll enjoy. The final activity is a day trip to Hangzhou. Now this...this city or this town was visited by Marco Polo, the famed explorer, and he called this area "Heaven on Earth" because he thought it was so beautiful and that activity, to go there, is \$170. So, we move on to food. I wanted this trip to be all about the local foods. I'm not much of a cook so I definitely chose to eat out everyday and I broke the itinerary for the food down to spending between \$1.95 to \$5.69 for breakfast because you can get a lot of street food that costs little to none. I mean, it's so cheap that you can afford ten days without breaking bank on food. So, it gets progressively more. Lunch costs about \$3-7 and dinner starts at \$4 to about \$10 and one of the main streets of food places that's really popular is the Wujiang Road. This is the place where you can enjoy all of the different delicacies that Shanghai has to offer and the total for the trip comes up to \$963.90 and it's a great itinerary so I would definitely recommend you researching the Asia getaway.

**Zim:** Awesome, thank you Quinn. So, if anybody has any questions for Quinn, hop into the "Q&A" and ask your questions there. Now, last but not least, everybody get ready. Anthony has a group getaway. So, we're going to go over to Anthony.

**Anthony:** Thank you. Thank you Zim for building up the hype. I appreciate that. Alright, I now have to look up the prior four and deliver this amazing group trip. Now, I just need to reopen my presentation cause it's broken now....and, we're back. Can you see my screen?

**Zim:** I...we can see your screen. There you go, perfect.

**Anthony:** Excellent. So, to this epic group trip with you plus eleven of your friends. So overall, we're leaving from LAX and we're going to Costa Rica and you're gonna be in an epic location having epic accommodations doing epic things with your eleven friends and let's just get right into it. The flight was booked with Orbitz.com and as you can see, we found an amazing deal to get to Costa Rica for \$349 from LA. However, you have 8 hours in Mexico City. What are we going to do with that eight hours? We're going to get outside of the airport and do a food tour in downtown Mexico City. So, not only do you get to go to Costa Rica, but you also get to go to get authentic Mexican cuisine in between.

**Zim:** One of the things I wanna say about Vayble, which is a really good resource for those who aren't really familiar. Vayble is sort of like Airbnb for tours. So, if you wanna do

something with somebody local in a new city, you go to Vayble.com. There's like food tours. There are, you know, people who will take you around to all of the art spots in the city. You know, local artists will take you around so it's a really cool website. People should check it out if you're looking for things to do that are relatively authentic.

**Anthony:** Absolutely. So now that you've been put in a food coma, you can sleep the rest of your flight over down to Costa Rica and here's where you'll be staying. This is a private villa on top of the hill, with an infinity pool with enough beds for you and all eleven of your friends. Let's just look at that again. So, here's your view to the south. You can see that infinity pool. It almost looks as if you're dropping off the hill and it's just a beautiful accommodation and you'll be living in a lap of luxury. Uh, we still have to show you a little bit more. So, here's your view to the west. As you can see, you have a hot tub hanging out in the corner there with a couple of hammocks. So, this is the ultimate relaxation accommodation and you know what, you're only paying \$90.00 a night per person to stay here. You will probably pay more at your local Holiday Inn. But here in Costa Rica, we're doing it right.

Alright, here's one of the bedrooms looking gorgeous, another one looking beautiful and a close up of your hot tub and your hammocks. So, your activities in Costa Rica, specifically Nosara, and we're gonna start you off with a sunset horseback ride down the beach so you can explore the small town that you'll be staying in and enjoy horseback riding with your friends, conversations and good times. Next, absolutely free, we're going to walk through the jungle. So, you're not walking through the woods lost. This is a self-guided walking tour of a path through a biological preserve and you'll see some of the tropical wildlife especially some of the famous Costa Rican colorful birds and anytime you go to a tropical location with eleven of your friends, you have to have the beach day where you're just beach bums all day and you don't really move from that spot and come back with a nice tan that your coworkers are jealous with for at least four weeks and...and this is how you would procure that tan.

So, snorkeling...all you need is a snorkel that you can find at your local Walmart and be able to swim and all you have to do is jump into the water from the beach and you'll see some of the amazing marine life in the Costa Rican waters in the Pacific Ocean. Also, when by a beautiful beach, we do this in Seattle quite often, we just have a bonfire. So, being in this country with eleven of your friends...it's more about the quality time that you're spending with your loved ones than anything else. So, this is the perfect venue and a perfect situation and the perfect scenario to do that. And for food, I am requesting you go to the grocery store and use the beautiful kitchen in your beautiful private villa. You can see that the Costa Rican grocery store has things that you're very familiar with like Fruit Loops and Cocoa Pebbles and your normal produce so don't be too scared to go to the local grocery store and have some of that comfort food that you enjoy back home and also, it saves you a lot of money. And all of this: beautiful Costa Rica and your beautiful private villa with the beaches and the sunsets and the hiking and the jungle tours all for less than a thousand at \$982. Isn't that wonderful?

**Zim:** Thank you Anthony. So, that is everyone. Those are all of our itineraries. They will be available for download a little later today. But, you have to be subscribed to the list that's on [travelnoire.com/TNIK](http://travelnoire.com/TNIK). If you've already entered in your email, no need to fear. You will get your downloadable itineraries today. So, we're going to move on to the questions. And, so the first question that we have is:



Without using the traditional travel hacking IE, excessive credit card reward programs or hotel airline royalty...loyalty programs, name a few other ways you can save big on international trips?

Now, we covered a lot of some of our favorite resources but throwing it over to all of you to talk about some of the other resources that you may use to score big on international flights. Oh, all of you...the curators.

**Anthony:** Thank you Zim.

**Zim:** Sorry

**Anthony:** So one of my favorite favorite tools to discount my flights is simply getting paid for every dollar that I spend and what I mean by that is you buy things everyday, you buy food, you pay bills...

**Zim:** No Credit cards

**Anthony:** No credit cards?

**Zim:** No

**Anthony:** Oh, well you can do this with a debit card too. So it's building up the points and spending those points towards your airfare is pretty simple to discount it.

**Modupe:** Some other way to discount your airfare sometimes without all of the tricks really is... I mean play around with your dates and, if you can, when available, try to book as far in advance as possible cause you know, especially with summer travel, the closer you book to, you know, your date of departure, the higher the prices of your flight will be. But, you know if you have the time, try to look into booking in advance.

**Zim:** One of the...

**Jelisa:** I wanna say the same, especially about international flights, like if you book six months in advance, it'll just get cheaper and cheaper. With my flight, it was \$514, but I actually found it for much cheaper, but I didn't make the proper screenshot, so I had to do it over. So, I found it for \$450. So, you can get from United States cheap to Europe for \$450. If you book it in advance, and you know the right websites to use like Norwegian airlines will get you from...it's a low budget, low-cost airline that'll get you from the United States over to Europe for...it starts at \$250 so you just have to know where to look and it book it in advance.

**Zim:** One of the other tools that I really enjoy is [kayak.com/explore](http://kayak.com/explore). It's a feature that Kayak came up with where you set a budget, so, how much you wanna spend on a particular flight and it'll show you a map of the world and it'll tell you, from your starting point, how much money it's gonna take to fly from each sort of destination. So, if you set your budget at \$1,000 and you wanna see how far you can go, and you're starting from LA, the map will show you how far you can go for \$1,000 and so that's one of the tools that I like to use. I'm also a big Priceline Negotiator fan. I will...cause I'm typically a little bit of a last-minute flight booker, so I will go onto [Priceline.com](http://Priceline.com) and name my own price. So, for instance, a little while ago, I was trying to get down to Austin and flights were probably in the \$500 range from San Francisco. So, I went into Priceline Negotiator, I typed in the most ridiculous price like \$10 or whatever and I'd work up from there and I ended up snagging a roundtrip flight I think for \$230 maybe. So, that's another tool that I like to use. Priceline Negotiator

typically works the closer to your date as possible because the airlines are trying to get rid of their seats. So, that's a tool that I've used.

**Anthony:** Similar to what Zim just described, if you can see my screen here, you can see a map of the United States and this one is just a [google.com/flights](https://www.google.com/flights) tool and you just type in the dates you wanna go somewhere and it shows you the prices of everywhere in the world that has an airport and if you know what date you want to travel, you can use this tool to just take a location off the map and find out how much it is and compare pretty easily.

**Zim:** You said it's [google.com/flights](https://www.google.com/flights)?

**Anthony:** Yes.

**Zim:** Okay, cool.

**Quinn:** The tool that I use...the biggest part of travel obviously is the airfare for international trips. So, when you, you know, all those recommendations that you guys shared was tips that I do. But, a way to save on the hotels is what I think a lot of us have chosen... was Airbnb. When I went to Bali, I had this villa that was about maybe 2000 sq ft. all to myself. I was doing a solo trip and the villa was about maybe...I think it was \$55 a night. So, that's one really key thing to use can use to save on hotel experience and still get that really nice luxury because you have a lot of good options on Airbnb that can be way better than a hotel that you can afford. So, that's something to look into.

**Zim:** Awesome Alright, so let's move on to the next question. People are curious. How often do you all personally travel in a year? Should I start? I travel...ummm, it depends... probably between two and four times a month on like really busy seasons. But, then when I sort of chill out, maybe once a month or so. So, that's me.

**Quinn:** Yeah, I travel about...about once a month.

Modupe: I think I...my travel schedule kind of goes... it varies throughout the year. But for this year alone, I've been on over twenty flights already this year...like actually well over... probably over thirty and to five brand new countries that I've never visited before already. So...

**Zim:** So break that down into a month. Monthly, how often do you travel?

Modupe: Monthly, if I had to average those out, I guess I would say probably about two to three times a month.

**Zim:** Okay, Jessica.

**Jessica:** So, I travel a lot less now than I used to. I probably travel about once every three months or once every two months whereas it used to be more like once a month.

**Zim:** Got it, cool. Jelisa.

**Jelisa:** I travel two to three times a month. I moved to Europe so I could be in a central location and just travel all around Europe because, once you get here, it's really cheap to travel all around so... about two or three times a month to different countries.

**Zim:** Alright, Anthony.

**Anthony:** So, I travel for work quite often and usually, at the end of my work trip, I tack on a personal trip. For the last four months, I've been out maybe twice a month on personal trips and work trips.

**Zim:** Got it. Now, for those who missed our Twitter chat, we had one that talked a lot about how to tag on personal trips to your work trips and how to extend vacay so feel free to hop on to twitter. The hashtag was Anthony, do you remember?

**Anthony:** It's escaping me right now.

**Zim:** Okay, I will get back to you on that. Alright, so we're moving on to the next question. Can you give us a few tips on how to get around the whole phone roaming and excessive international phone bills issues?

**Modupe:** Do not turn up. Turn off.

**Quinn:** That's an obvious one. But, I've looked into..i've seen National Geographic. They actually have a lot of different programs for international cell phone. Now, I haven't tried any of the programs, but, they look really intriguing. So, if you check out the National Geographic website, you can look into those cellular packages. Now, it looked...like, it was not your typical smartphone. This was like an old style Motorola phone, but it works literally everywhere in the world.

**Zim:** Anthony, do you have something to say?

**Anthony:** Yes, I am one of those rare people with a house phone and my house phone is called Uma and with Uma, you get an app you download to your phone and now, I can bring my Seattle house phone number with me anywhere I go and make calls off any wi-fi connection anywhere in the world. So, if you have access to wif-fi, then you have the ability to make phone calls without being charged any of those fees.

**Zim:** Nice.

**Modupe:** I have cellphone carrier and I also have the droid. I'm one of those few people who doesn't have an iPhone. But, with that said, whenever I have a wi-fi connection, I have free (video freezes) and that applies everywhere in the world. So, I have been able to call from the most remote areas in Asia for...

**Zim:** What was the tool? You sort of cut out.

**Modupe:** It's uh...sorry. It is a wireless calling feature that comes alone with my data plan for my cellphone

**Zim:** What kind of cellphone do you have?

**Modupe:** I have a droid

**Zim:** Okay, cool. So, the career of the tagging time off Twitter chat that I'd mentioned a little bit earlier, the hashtag is #TNtimeoff. So, if you hop into Twitter and you use that hashtag, you can find that conversation. Alright, so this is a question that we already answered. But, it's from Amber. How far in advance should a flight be booked to save money because most of my trips are last minute and I think some of the tools like Priceline Negotiator...anything else that you all can think of?

Jelisa: International should definitely be three to six months.

Zim: For domestic, what do you think?

**Anthony:** So, I have a [white paper](#), it's an article that explains the best way to time... to book a trip to each continent. The day or the amount of days in advance from place to place, even from city to city, United States and I'll make sure Zim gets this tool out and it'll show you the best way to or the best timing to book a trip to anywhere.

**Quinn:** I think you should definitely just research the off seasons if you really wanna maximize, you know, the amount of money you want to spend, look for the off seasons

definitely in Asia during the, you know, rainy season since it's raining a lot and so you can get more cheaper deals with hotels and flights. So, look into that time.

**Zim:** Absolutely. Alright, so we will move on to the next question. It is for Modupe. Modupe, and this is from Elon..Elen...sorry. Can you please be a little more thorough on how you navigated to get that amazing roundtrip price to St. Lucia for \$207?

**Modupe:** Absolutely. So, I used primarily theflightdeal.com and with theflightdeal.com, what it does is it makes you a professional troller. You literally...you roll out of bed, you pick up your device, you head to the flightdeal.com and you literally...you see what the listing is for the day and it can be...there are tons of posts and there are tons of alerts from LA to NY, from Miami, Dallas, Phoenix...everywhere in the United States and what they do is they tell you, you know, Delta is attacking United's airfare and they're dropping the prices from like last week so head to Norway for this price or, you know, head to Central America for this price and basically, that was one of theflightdeal.com alerts...was it said head to the Caribbean for less than \$300. If you book in this timeframe, if you book now and if you... and you book with, I believe they said Orbitz.com and you use, as Jessica explained, and you use the ITA Matrix to kind of pop up the...or find the itinerary and then you head over to Kayak or Orbitz to book it. So, I also know that the itinerary as of...I found that itinerary a few weeks ago. But, as of last week, I believe Zim, the Travel Noire CEO, had also found the flight for about \$700 I'm sorry...\$270. So again, it's still under \$300. So exactly, there are some examples popping up right now for the flightdeal.com and how the website works.

**Zim:** So, essentially what you would do is you would click on a fare that you find attractive and it basically lays out all of the instructions for you. So, how do you search for availability? You click here. These are sort of the things that you use. It'll give you a screenshot of the actual price so \$416. So essentially, you just go to this site. They post deals every single day to different parts of the world and like Modupe said, you troll. You troll, and you look for flight deals that work for you. A lot of times, some of my vacations are based on whatever deal theflightdeal has. So, you know, that's another really amazing tool as well.

**Zim:** Alright, so we are going to move on to the next question. This question comes from DJ Rob. There are not a lot of flights leaving from where I live. What do I do in this case?

**Modupe:** DJ Rob, where do you live?

**Quinn:** Find the closest

**Jelissa:** Find the closest

**Jessica:** Be flexible

**Jelisa:** It really depends on where he lives. If he can take like a bus or drive to the nearest like major airport, then that would be best for him. But, there's no...

**Zim:** Sorry, go ahead.

**Jelisa:** No, you.

**Zim:** I think that a lot of people...a lot of people that I've encountered have sort of thought that if I don't leave from my exact location, I'm not going to catch the fare. So, for instance, I put up a deal...I think the deal was from D.C. to like South America for like \$300 or something and somebody who was in Boston or somewhere from North was like are they flying out of Boston and I said you can take a bus or a bolt bus or whatever bus goes from Boston to D.C. or whatever, find a flight...you still will find a price...you still will come in cheaper than if you were, you know, to find a price from Boston or wherever you were. Be

flexible in the airports. A lot of times, I look across the whole western seaboard. If there is a cheaper flight from Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, LA, San Diego, I look at all of those because essentially, the price is gonna be...is still gonna come out cheaper for me.

**Modupe:** I actually know someone who is flying out of...who lives in New York City and is flying Monday out of Toronto to head to Tokyo for two weeks because they were still saving \$500 on the flight cause it was easier to book from Toronto to Tokyo roundtrip than it was from New York City.

**Jessica:** Yeah, it definitely depends on what region you're in. Like, I'm in D.C. and it's easy to get to Philly. It's easy to get to New York City. You can, like you said, get on the bolt bus, take the train up and as long as the total cost for you to get there is less than the flight would be from your direct city there, you kind of just have to be flexible and make it work.

**Zim:** Absolutely. Alright, so this question if for the ladies from Tanya. Women, how do you feel about solo travel?

**Jelisa:** It's my favorite way to travel. I love it the most because there's something about traveling solo. You get to do whatever you want. You get to stay in one place as long as you'd like and don't really have to worry about grouping everyone together or anything like that and if you ever get lonely, you can always meet up with another solo traveler or you can use the website that Zim told us about, Vayable, and find some people to hang out with. So, solo travel, I think, is the best travel for me.

**Zim:** And for everyone who is really interested in the solo travel conversation, we also had a Twitter chat on solo travel and if you head to Twitter and you use the #TNsolo, you will find a really really rich conversation on solo travel. Alright, so we are winding down. In the last five minutes, we will take one more question. This one is what are your tips for shipping back gifts or presents from international locales? Any issues with Customs or TSA?

**Modupe:** You really need to look into what the policies are prior to trying to ship. Additionally, I find that the individuals that are selling you the goods are really really knowledgeable about shipping. For instance, I was shipping like ten bottles of wine back from South Africa for friends and family and they were...the people selling me the wine were extremely knowledgeable about how to pack it, shipping costs, what you say when you check your cargo at the counter, what happens when you're on the receiving end, picking up your cargo in the States. So, I typically use buyers and sellers as my resource as well as checking policies online prior to shipping.

**Quinn:** Yeah, I would go off exactly the same thing that Modupe said cause when I went to Cuba, I bought tons and tons of art and one thing that you have to have is a receipt and a certificate from the actual artist when you're taking it through the airport cause they want to make sure that you're not taking valuable goods from the country, you know, something that's not historic. So, definitely talk with your seller. Research online too because that's where I found out that you needed the receipt and certificate before leaving. I researched that, I found that article online before going to the trip...before going to Cuba so when I went there, I knew how to approach the seller.

**Zim:** Got it, awesome. And, one last thing before we sign off. I get this question a lot and I know all of you get this question as well. The question about language...handling the sort of

local language barrier. What do you do to sort of recommend to prepare? I'm a pretty spontaneous traveler. I typically go in like hands first. A lot of times, I can probably say hello and bye and thank you and I'll just do sort of signing...or signing as much as I can. But, on the safer side of things, I'll keep, what is it, Google Translate or I'll keep like, what I'll do is I'll go on my Ipad, I may translate a complicated sentence like I'm looking for this destination. I have to be there by 2. How do I get there? And then, I'll translate it and I'll screenshot it and if I have trouble finding it, I'll just show that person in their local language. So, what are some tips that you all recommend?

**Anthony:** One of my favorite apps is called Duolingo and it allows you to, through fun and games, learn some of the basics of many languages and I play that quite often. Right now, I'm trying to get my Spanish together for this Costa Rica trip.

**Zim:** Awesome. So, that is the end of our Google + Hangout. I want everyone, before we sign off, to give us your name again and where people can find you on social media. I will start with Quinn.

**Quinn:** Okay. My name is Quinn Russell. You can check me out at Travellers Bazaar on Instagram. That's T-r-a-v-e-l-l-e-r-s and Bazaar, that is B-a-z-a-a-r. Also, you can find my website, Travellersbazaar.com and through that website, you'll see all of my social media handles.

**Zim:** Alright, Modupe.

**Modupe:** Alright, so I am Modupe Sonuyi and you can find me at @superdubersleepy on Instagram. S-u-p-e-r-d-u-p-e-r-s-l-e-e-p-y, superdubersleepy, and you can find me writing article after article on travelnoire.com, and a personal travel website to follow...soon coming.

**Zim:** Alright, Jessica.

**Jessica:** I am Jessica Belle. You can find me on travelnoire.com and you can find me on Instagram at @wealthlovebeauty, w-e-a-l-t-h-l-o-v-e-b-e-a-u-t-y.

**Zim:** Alright, Jelisa.

**Jelisa:** I'm Jelisa Mone and you can find me at standbytraveler.com or on IG at @standbytraveler.

**Zim:** And Anthony.

**Anthony:** So yes, you can find me below on Instagram at @ThinkGoodThoughts and Twitter at @Anthonyesque and Seattle if you're around.

**Zim:** Alright, cool. As always, you all can always find me at Zimism at Z-i-m-i-s-m. This chat will be available on our YouTube channel, YouTube.com/thetravelnoire. So, be sure to check it out. We will be doing a transcription of this hangout in a blog post. So, check that out when it comes and thank you again everybody for taking time out of your schedule to join. Thank you...all of our wonderful curators for the itineraries that you presented. If you have any questions or anything, feel free to hit each of them up and have a good Saturday!